



Bureau of Land Management

# Travel and Tourism Action Plan

To Implement the National Travel and Tourism Strategy for the United States • 2019





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# Foreword

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proud to share our “Travel and Tourism Action Plan” to promote public lands to local communities and travelers from across the country and around the world. The BLM is responsible for managing a wide variety of public lands and waters that people visit and experience every day. These remarkably beautiful places are not only appreciated for their scenic values, but they are also part of working landscapes, providing opportunities for activities ranging from ranching, mining, logging, and energy development, to hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities. Public lands provide valuable, tangible goods and materials that people rely on and use every day and also connect people to places and experiences that create lifelong memories for American families.

The BLM strives to be a good neighbor in the communities we serve. Through the “Travel and Tourism Action Plan,” we identify actions to connect people and demonstrate the economic, cultural, recreational, and educational values derived from public lands through public-private partnerships. Our agency works closely with partners, the tourism industry, and native and traditional communities to strengthen these relationships and leverage resources to improve stewardship of public lands. In pursuit of our multiple-use mission, the BLM is committed to balancing uses for the benefit of current and future generations and supporting conservation and sustainable tourism.

A connection to America’s public lands is a connection to the country’s natural and cultural heritage. The BLM and our travel and tourism partners support the development of lifelong connections to public lands, resources, and traditional uses. We look forward to working with you on the stewardship of resources and connecting visitors with public lands.

## The Language of Travel and Tourism

The terms “visitor settings” and “visitor experiences” are commonly used when discussing travel and tourism and are referenced throughout this document. The BLM is responsible for managing a wide variety of public lands and waters that people visit and experience. These lands and waters represent unique visitor settings. Visitor settings include primitive to urban areas including austere cliffs, wild rivers, deep forests, golden grasslands, foot and bike trails, visitor centers, and developed campsites. These settings provide remarkable opportunities for different types of visitor experiences including activities like hiking, hunting, self-reflection, learning about wildlife, learning about history and different cultures, exploring dinosaur tracksites, biking, photography, and more. The opportunities are endless. For more information about terms used in this document, please see the glossary.

# Introduction

The travel and tourism industry substantially influences the overall U.S. and global economy and is one of the largest industries in the United States. In the U.S., the leisure and hospitality sector is the fifth largest employer and one of six priority sectors likely to drive domestic employment growth (McKinsey Global Institute 2011). As of 2015, the U.S. ranks as one of the top two international tourism destinations in the world (Department of Commerce 2015). Domestic and international visitors to the United States generated \$2.1 trillion in economic output in 2014, including \$927.9 billion in direct travel expenditures that spurred an additional \$1.2 trillion in other industries (U.S. Travel Association 2015).

U.S. travel and tourism entered the spotlight in 2012 when a Task Force on Travel and Competitiveness was formed under Executive Order 13597, with the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior serving as co-chairs. The Task Force developed and released the “National Travel and Tourism Strategy” for the United States (national strategy) in May 2012. The national strategy established an overarching goal of increasing American jobs by attracting and welcoming 100 million international visitors to travel throughout the U.S. who are estimated to spend \$250 billion annually by the end of 2021. In order to ensure success, the national strategy directs federal agencies to develop detailed plans that continue to make travel and tourism a priority; to partner with one another; and to partner with national, state, tribal, and local travel and tourism industry partners in a collaborative effort to meet demand and provide an outstanding American visitor experience. This “Travel and Tourism Action Plan” (action plan) will help the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to accomplish these directives.

The BLM plays an important role in meeting the ambitious goals described within the national strategy. The BLM manages the most federal public lands and waters of any agency, and most of the land is located within a 1-hour drive from both rural and urban communities. For example, the BLM offers world-class visitor settings and visitor experiences across diverse landscapes, such as boating on Lake Havasu in Arizona, stargazing in New Mexico’s Sabinoso Wilderness, off road riding in the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area in California, fishing in Oregon’s John Day River, and exploring our nation’s history along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

In response to the national strategy, the BLM is releasing this action plan to provide a path forward to help the BLM attract and welcome domestic and international visitors to travel within the United States. This action plan provides a comprehensive framework for managing travel and tourism. It identifies sustainable tourism-based actions that the BLM will take to provide exceptional opportunities for domestic and international visitors, contribute to the economy and communities, and conserve America’s public lands for future generations. The BLM will implement this action plan across natural and cultural resource programs by working with federal, state, local, and tribal partners and travel and tourism industry organizations. If any additions or changes are made to the national strategy’s guidance, the BLM’s “Travel and Tourism Action Plan” will be updated as needed.

## Garnet Ghost Town, Montana

Those who visit Garnet can wander down what used to be the bustling main street of the now-abandoned mountain gold mining town and peer into the windows of the remaining faded wooden structures while trying to imagine what it must have been like more than a century ago. Today, the BLM has stabilized and preserved the remaining two dozen buildings, and more than 25,000 people visit the area each year to take a glimpse into part of Montana’s amazing mining past. BLM ranger volunteers are on hand to give visitors historical and other information about Garnet.



# The Federal Role in Travel and Tourism

The 2012 “National Travel and Tourism Strategy” recognizes that the role of the Federal Government is to create the conditions for economic growth by ensuring that government services meet the demand for tourism and that natural and cultural resources are protected for future generations. A tourist is commonly defined by the travel industry as someone traveling 50 miles (one way) or more from home. Many tourist destinations are on federal public lands and waters, and tourists rely on the Federal Government to provide the transportation routes, infrastructure, visitor information, and other services to accommodate touring public. The national strategy guides federal agencies to implement the following actions:

- Promote domestic and international tourism throughout the United States, thus increasing the U.S. market share of worldwide travel and supporting job creation across the nation.
- Communicate tourism opportunities in the United States to a larger domestic and international audience.
- Continue to make travel and tourism a priority.
- Coordinate efforts among federal agencies, and work with partners in a collaborative effort to meet future demand.
- Develop detailed implementation plans (like this plan) to realize the promise of the national strategy’s recommendations.

In order to provide cohesive leadership across the Federal Government, the **National Travel and Tourism Office** was established within the Department of Commerce. The National Travel and Tourism Office supports and tracks the implementation of the national strategy. It also helps to (1) reduce institutional barriers to tourism, (2) administer joint efforts, (3) provide official travel and tourism statistics, and (4) coordinate efforts across federal agencies through the Tourism Policy Council.



The National Travel and Tourism Office also oversees the Tourism Policy Council, works closely with the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, and coordinates with the Corporation for Travel Promotion (which conducts business as Brand USA). These three travel and tourism organizations are described here:

- The **Tourism Policy Council** was created to coordinate policy and programs related to travel and tourism, recreation, and national heritage resources and to ensure that the U.S. national interest in tourism is fully considered in federal decisions. The Tourism Policy Council is chaired by the Secretary of Commerce and has four working groups, which focus on: marketing and promotions, ease of travel, visitor services, and research.
- The **Travel and Tourism Advisory Board** advises the Secretary of Commerce and the National Travel and Tourism Office on (1) government policies and programs that affect the U.S. travel and tourism industry, (2) current and emerging issues, and (3) industry-related challenges. The Travel and Tourism Advisory Board is comprised of up to 30 members that represent the diverse nature of the travel and tourism industry and operate under the Federal Advisory Committee Act.
- The **Corporation for Travel Promotion (Brand USA)** was created to encourage private sector participation and cross-agency coordination. The Secretary of Commerce (in consultation with the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security) works with the National Travel and Tourism Office, federal partners, and Tourism Policy Council to coordinate with Brand USA to maximize economic and diplomatic benefits of travel to the U.S., conduct research, provide information to travelers, promote travel to the U.S., and promote tourism to rural and urban areas equally. To market the U.S. to domestic and international travelers, Brand USA deploys a number of messaging and media market-driven platforms and programs, including broadcast, print, digital/social and cooperative marketing, consumer websites, trade shows, and themed events.

# The BLM's Role in Travel and Tourism

## Supporting Conservation, Commerce, Community, and Culture through Sustainable Tourism

The BLM administers more public land than any other federal agency in the United States—more than 245 million surface acres (approximately 10 percent of the nation's surface land area) and approximately 700 million subsurface acres of minerals. The BLM's multiple use and sustained yield principles, set forth in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, direct the BLM to manage public land resources for a wide variety of uses and values, including "new and emerging values" such as travel and tourism. This plan provides a framework for implementing sustainable travel and tourism across BLM public lands. Sustainable travel and tourism are among factors considered through the BLM's resource management planning process.

BLM-managed landscapes provide diverse visitor settings, from the red rock formations outside of Moab, Utah, to the San Juan Islands in Washington. These visitor settings provide different visitor experiences that can result in benefits to the visitor. Economic benefits are realized in the market value of tourism (locally and nationally) and its contributions to the U.S. gross domestic product. Social, cultural, and nonmarket benefits are equally important. Social and cultural benefits are realized in the enjoyment of individuals and families and by communities that host visitors. Nonmarket benefits are realized in the stewardship of public lands and the ecosystem services that are provided (e.g., clean water, clean air) to the touring public and surrounding communities.

### **Sustainable tourism:**

Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities (World Tourism Organization 2017). The BLM further defines sustainable tourism to include management practices that support sustaining resources consistent with multiple use.





Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, Colorado

## World-Class Visitor Settings and Experiences

The BLM is in a unique position to expand and deeply enrich the U.S. tourism portfolio. If there is such a thing as the “quintessential” American landscape, it likely lies within the realm of public lands managed by the BLM. Millions of visitors travel to BLM-managed public lands each year to participate in a wide array of activities within many different types of settings. Activities such as camping, fishing, hiking, hunting, kayaking, mountain biking, off-highway vehicle driving/riding, and wildlife watching are available in settings ranging from primitive to urban. Recreation areas and National Conservation Lands provide opportunities for visitors with many different interests to explore and recreate. This combination of diverse activities available within a wide variety of settings leads to quality experiences and beneficial outcomes for individuals, communities, economies, and the environment.

The BLM-managed public lands provide unique opportunities for cultural and scientific-related travel and tourism. They provide some of the most significant evidence of human prehistory and history within the United States, along with paleontological resources that span tens of thousands to hundreds of millions of years in age. The historic and contemporary role of exploring for, claiming, and mining minerals in the West is also of interest to many domestic and international visitors and entwined with America’s history as a nation.

Recreation opportunities and tourism are interrelated. The BLM manages unique lands that provide innumerable opportunities to explore. The BLM recreation strategy titled “Connecting with Communities” includes the goals of bolstering economic opportunities in local communities, delivering outstanding recreation experiences to visitors, and sustaining recreation settings on public lands. Many of the goals outlined in the recreation strategy relate directly to the actions presented in this action plan.

This action plan outlines a framework to help the BLM implement not only the recreation strategy, but also wildlife, heritage, range, and other BLM program goals.



## **The BLM Tourism and Community Services Program**

The BLM Tourism and Community Services Program works with other BLM programs to support conservation, commerce, community, and culture to provide outstanding visitor opportunities on public lands. Under the direction given within the national strategy, the BLM seeks to engage with federal, tribal, and private travel and tourism partners to provide and enhance visitor settings, visitor experiences, and visitor services, while conserving public lands and waters for future generations.

The BLM will use sustainable tourism practices to help visitors enjoy and value the world-class natural and cultural visitor assets on BLM-managed public lands. Like all of the BLM's work, a locally based approach is important to successfully implement sustainable tourism. This approach can help create travel and tourism jobs that provide services to the visiting public and help create economic, social, and cultural benefits for surrounding urban and rural communities.



## Opportunities and Challenges

The BLM's multiple use and sustained yield mission means that the public uses these public lands and waters for a variety of different purposes. In addition, more than one use may occur within a single area. The BLM also works to balance uses within the overall capacity of an area. For example, in some areas, valuable natural and cultural resources could be impacted by visitor use exceeding a site's capacity. In turn, this could reduce the quality of visitor experiences. In other areas, sites are underutilized or visitors who might be interested in experiencing them may not be aware of these opportunities. In addition, maps and visitor information are sometimes inconsistent, difficult to find, or not available in the visitor's desired language. These factors affect the BLM's ability to provide outstanding visitor experiences, recreation opportunities, consistent public access, and accurate information. In order to address these challenges and implement the goals of the national strategy, this BLM action plan serves to:

- Strategically promote travel and tourism across the visitor use spectrum.
- Provide and enhance visitor settings, experiences, and a variety of recreation opportunities consistent with land use planning.
- Improve the quality of visitor experiences and provide for public access and safety.
- Contribute to local, state, and national economies while conserving, protecting, and restoring natural and cultural resources for future generations.
- Share the BLM's mission with domestic and international visitors.
- Assist in creating a community network of service providers for travel and tourism.

Planning for and managing travel and tourism creates opportunities for public-private partnerships to help fulfill the BLM's mission. These partnerships hold the potential to introduce domestic and international visitors to the unique opportunities set within BLM-managed natural and cultural landscapes; to share with visitors how important their role is in helping to conserve these beautiful and unique places; and to help support economic opportunities for local residents and small businesses in rural communities.

# The BLM's Travel and Tourism Actions

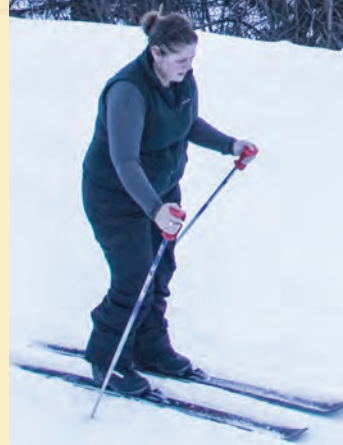
This action plan provides detailed direction on how the BLM is currently implementing or will implement the “goals and strategies” described within the national strategy. Only those goals and strategies that are relevant to the BLM’s multiple use and sustained yield mission are included. The action plan helps to fulfill the BLM’s mission as well as support the efforts of our travel and tourism partners.

The national strategy is organized within five travel and tourism categories, including:

- Promoting the United States
- Enabling and Enhancing Travel and Tourism to and within the United States
- Providing World-Class Customer Service and Visitor Experience
- Coordinating Across Government
- Conducting Research and Measuring Results

Goals and strategies are listed under each of these five categories. This action plan details specific actions that will help achieve the goals identified in the national strategy. The actions will help the BLM address opportunities and challenges that are designed for implementation at the national, state, and local levels.

**Implementation Note:** The following discretionary actions will help focus the BLM’s travel and tourism efforts. Some of the actions may already be underway, while others will begin in the future. The actions will be implemented as resources allow and may be prioritized based on current needs and staffing. Each local and state office has unique priorities, and each office will determine which actions coincide with their priorities. While some of these actions may be quick to implement, others are ongoing or may take longer to implement.



## THE BIG PICTURE and where the BLM fits in...

- In 2012, the Task Force on Travel and Competitiveness created the “National Travel and Tourism Strategy” to promote domestic and international tourism throughout the United States.
- The following provides a breakdown of the specific goals and strategies, from the national strategy that are relevant to the BLM’s mission and addressed in this “BLM Travel and Tourism Action Plan.”

### Promoting the United States

**Goal 1:** Increase U.S. travel and tourism exports and encourage Americans to travel within the United States and its territories.

**Strategy 1:** Provide a welcoming entry experience to foreign visitors.

**Strategy 2:** Coordinate with Brand USA and leverage partnerships.

**Strategy 3:** Enhance federal promotional efforts.

**Strategy 4:** Provide user-friendly planning tools and resources.

### Enabling and Enhancing Travel and Tourism to and within the United States

**Goal 2:** Reduce barriers to trade and make it safer and more efficient for visitors to enter and travel within the United States and its territories.

**Strategy 5:** Maintain and improve transportation infrastructure.

### Providing World-Class Customer Service and Visitor Experience

**Goal 3:** Provide a high-quality visitor experience for U.S. and international visitors to achieve high customer satisfaction and inspire repeat visits.

**Strategy 1:** Improve visitor services at federally managed sites.

**Strategy 2:** Foster a skilled hospitality and tourism industry workforce.

**Strategy 3:** Support small business in travel and tourism.

### Coordinating Across Government

**Goal 4:** Prioritize and coordinate support for travel and tourism across the Federal Government.

**Strategy 1:** Establish travel and tourism as a U.S. Government priority.

**Strategy 2:** Support tourism development.

### Conducting Research and Measuring Results

**Goal 5:** Collect and analyze data to support decisionmaking in the public and private sectors and allow the Federal Government to better measure the effectiveness of its efforts to increase travel and tourism.

**Strategy 1:** Conduct research.



# Promoting the United States

## National Strategy Goal 1:

Increase U.S. travel and tourism exports and encourage Americans to travel within the United States and its territories.

Sacramento River Bend Area, California

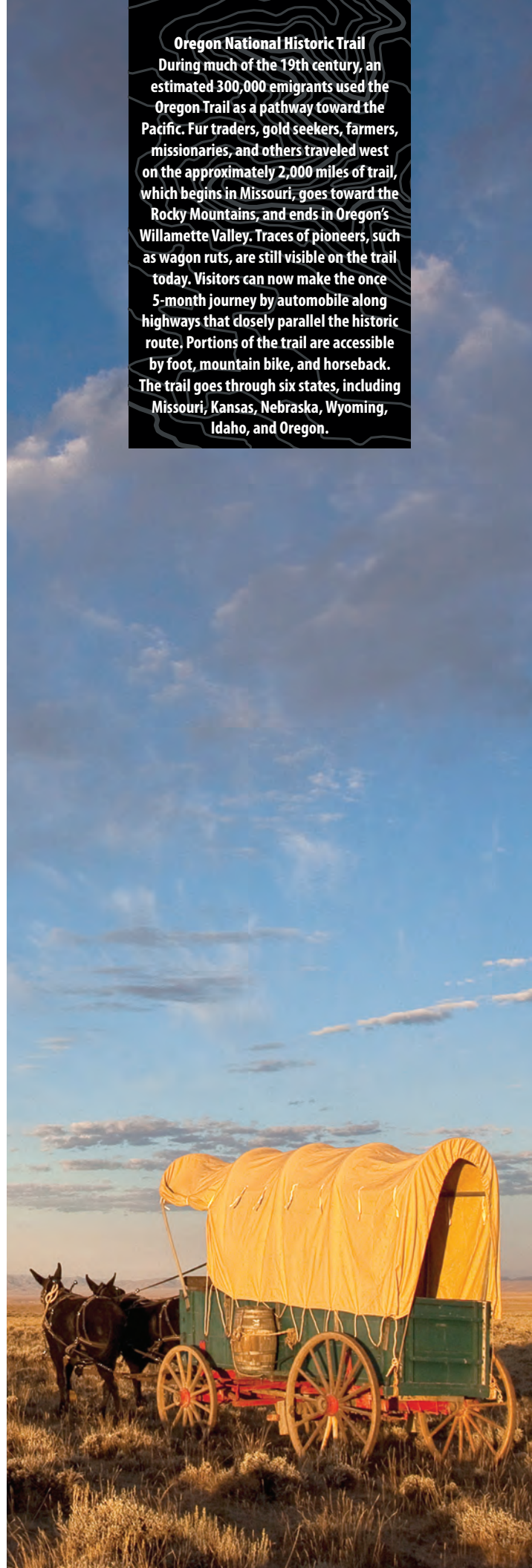
The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 1 includes:

- The Federal Government plays a unique and essential role in promoting the American tourism product to potential travelers.
- The depth and breadth of federal engagement in travel and tourism confers on the Federal Government a special opportunity to communicate with potential visitors using a consistent marketing message and a broad spectrum of media. Once potential travelers have embraced the idea of traveling to and within the United States, they need access to information on how to execute their trips.
- Although the sale and marketing of travel goods and services is largely the domain of the private sector, the public sector plays an important role in communicating the diversity of travel experiences available in the United States.
- There are significant opportunities for new and existing public-private partnerships to amplify positive messaging.
- Promotional efforts should highlight a wide variety of destinations that would entice visitors to extend their stays, from the well-known to those off the beaten path, near major metropolitan centers and in rural areas, in the continental United States as well as in Alaska, Hawaii, and the territories.

**Oregon National Historic Trail**  
During much of the 19th century, an estimated 300,000 emigrants used the Oregon Trail as a pathway toward the Pacific. Fur traders, gold seekers, farmers, missionaries, and others traveled west on the approximately 2,000 miles of trail, which begins in Missouri, goes toward the Rocky Mountains, and ends in Oregon's Willamette Valley. Traces of pioneers, such as wagon ruts, are still visible on the trail today. Visitors can now make the once 5-month journey by automobile along highways that closely parallel the historic route. Portions of the trail are accessible by foot, mountain bike, and horseback. The trail goes through six states, including Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, Idaho, and Oregon.



White Mountains  
National Recreation Area, Alaska



## ***National Strategy Goal 1, Strategy 1:*** ***Provide a welcoming entry experience to foreign visitors.***

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 1, strategy 1 includes:

- Actively encourage visitors to come to the United States by communicating a welcoming message.
- Engage officials at the highest levels of the Federal Government to communicate that the United States wants visitors, and provide accurate information, a welcoming message, and an invitation to visit.



Continental Divide  
National Scenic Trail,  
New Mexico

### **BLM Actions**

- Welcome visitors (domestic and international) to BLM-managed public lands, and provide information about visitor settings and experiences through relevant BLM forums (e.g., [blm.gov](http://blm.gov), [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov), and individual BLM destinations) and with travel and tourism partners.
- Ensure key travel information is delivered in high demand languages.
- For sites with capacity to accommodate additional visitation, highlight local and off-the-beaten path attractions, services, and community and cultural interests that sustain and enhance the local geographical character of a place.
- Provide visitors with online georeferenced BLM recreation maps, as appropriate. Share this data with state tourism departments, domestic and international travel and tourism partners, and other travel information outlets.
- Ensure BLM travel data sources (e.g., Recreation Management Information System, [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov)) are accurate and updated.
- Work with private and nonprofit travel and tourism partners (e.g., Brand USA, U.S. Travel Association, local chambers of commerce) to ensure that data on BLM visitor settings, visitor experiences, and access are accurate and up to date.
- Work with the federal interagency Recreation One Stop team and other organizations to ensure that BLM information about visitor settings and visitor services is available to private and nonprofit travel and tourism partners.
- Maintain BLM web pages, social media outlets, and visitor information at BLM visitor destinations using:
  - Contemporary travel and tourism content and outreach technologies.
  - Travel and tourism use and trend reports.
  - Travel access and safety information.
  - Multilingual interpretive and educational products.
  - Input and technical assistance from travel and tourism partners.
- Explore the use of crowdsourcing as a future data source with partner organizations.
- Develop shared travel and tourism federal messaging initiatives by collaborating with federal travel and tourism partners.
- Expand BLM visitor outreach by developing messaging and media partnerships with domestic and international travel and tourism partners.

## ***National Strategy Goal 1, Strategy 2: Coordinate with Brand USA and leverage partnerships.***

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 1, strategy 2 includes:

- Coordinate federal promotional efforts with Brand USA's marketing campaign. Provide information to Brand USA in support of its marketing and communication programs and activities.
- Coordinate promotional efforts with the travel and tourism industry. Use new and existing agreements to conduct joint promotions that match the unique assets and messages of the Federal Government with the resources and expertise of travel and tourism businesses.
- Join nonfederal tourism authorities in place-based and activity-based promotional campaigns. Provide grants and technical assistance to qualified public sector entities to support their efforts to attract and serve additional visitors.



Campbell Creek Science Center, Alaska

### **BLM Actions**

- Use new and existing BLM partnerships with state, local, tribal, and territorial governments and public-private partners to create and deliver content about public lands and waters.
- Identify key travel and tourism partners. Collaborate on shared goals, as appropriate.
- Share updated content for Brand USA's Road Trip, Great Outdoors campaigns, My Public Lands, and other market themes.
- Provide Brand USA with an overview of BLM museum collections and their locations.
- Share relevant social media content with Brand USA.
- Use and add to a publicly accessible BLM image library.
- Participate in existing state travel and tourism conferences and existing state recreation/tourism roundtables.
- Develop state recreation and tourism roundtables where they do not exist, as appropriate.
- Develop a national agreement with the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) to facilitate cooperative travel and tourism work with tribal communities that implements the "BLM Travel and Tourism Action Plan" and AIANTA's national strategy.
- Develop a tribal travel and tourism guide in coordination with AIANTA and as part of implementation of BLM Handbook H-1780-1, "Improving and Sustaining BLM-Tribal Relations."

Ironwood Forest National Monument, Arizona

A woman with a backpack is sitting on a large rock in a desert landscape, looking out at a large mountain range. The scene is set in Ironwood Forest National Monument, Arizona.

**The Travel Promotion Act of 2009** created a nonprofit travel and tourism partnership for federal agencies and the travel and tourism industry called Brand USA. Brand USA works with the Federal Government and private travel and tourism partners, while informing travelers and showcasing rural and urban areas equally when promoting travel to the United States.



## ***National Strategy Goal 1, Strategy 3: Enhance federal promotional efforts.***

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 1, strategy 3 includes:

- Establish a unified federal promotional effort in the international marketplace to encourage travel and tourism. Coordinate agency promotional efforts and use personnel and programs to amplify the message. Coordinate travel policy communications as well as marketing messages and programs.
- Increase exposure by travelers and potential tourists to promotional materials for federally managed destinations. Cross-promote American cities, parks, museums, and other points of interest. Develop and promote itineraries designed to appeal to visitors with interest in certain subjects, activities, historic events, or anchored by well-known and popular destinations.

## **BLM Actions**

- Provide and enhance information about BLM visitor settings and attractions by providing a variety of updated messaging and media content to travel and tourism partners.
- Participate in interagency promotion of America's Great Outdoors by providing information about the visitor settings and visitor experiences managed by the BLM.
- Use new technology and social media to provide visitor information and communication materials about BLM destinations for international and domestic visitors.
- Engage travel and tourism providers on the importance of applying sustainable travel and tourism techniques on BLM-managed public lands. Emphasize their role in:
  - Applying and teaching sustainable tourism practices.
  - Telling the unique stories of BLM public lands and gateway communities.
  - Managing visitor numbers.
  - Providing and promoting outstanding visitor settings and experiences to domestic and international visitors.
- Coordinate with geotourism councils and other travel and tourism partners, including gateway communities, to highlight visitor settings and visitor experiences available within the BLM's recreation areas and National Conservation Lands.
- Provide support for government (e.g., federal, state, tribal, local) and private partners leading familiarization tours for international and national travel providers.
- Provide travel and tourism partners with electronic access to select BLM messaging and media materials.
- Highlight unique BLM visitor settings and visitor experiences that can be accessed within a short air connection or driving tour from U.S. national visitor gateways.
- Partner with national, state, tribal, and local tourism service providers as they build visitor itineraries.



Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area,  
Visitor Center, Nevada

## ***National Strategy Goal 1, Strategy 4:*** ***Provide user-friendly planning tools and resources.***

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 1, strategy 4 includes:

- Ensure data on federally managed websites is comprehensive, reliable, and accessible to individual visitors and to application and program developers. Fully utilize existing databases to connect potential visitors with the range of sites, experiences, and resources available to travelers.
- Standardize and improve trip planning sites operated by federal agencies. Explore cost-effective options for providing planning materials and tools in multiple languages.
- Use market research conducted by Brand USA and the Department of Commerce to analyze the demand among potential travelers for new or improved trip planning tools. Develop focused plans for development of new tools based on this analysis.



Upper Chippewa River,  
Wisconsin

### **BLM Actions**

- Participate in the development of trip planning information for international and domestic tourists to visit BLM-managed public lands and waters. Provide information that highlights American heritage and history, rural destinations and local visitor services, and recreation opportunities of interest to groups that are underrepresented on public land.
- Use emerging technologies and a variety of methods to deliver portable BLM data and information that partners can use to develop their own travel planning tools.
- Ensure that externally available BLM data is accurate, current, and consistent.
- Collaborate with local and national geotourism councils to develop and maintain BLM visitor services content used for online interactive destination maps; itinerary-building tools, apps, and stories; and other geotourism visitor information.
- Continue to ensure that Google Maps includes accurate boundary and visitor information for BLM-managed public lands and waters.
- Expand the visibility of BLM online interactive recreation maps by sharing widely with travel and tourism partners and visitors.
- Partner with tribal, national, regional, state, and local travel and tourism partners, and use emerging technologies.
- Encourage BLM managers to provide the public with trip planning services, permits, and information about BLM-managed public lands and waters via the Recreation One Stop team and other organizations.
- Maintain partnerships with federal travel and tourism partners through the Federal Recreation Council and other organizations.
- Integrate voluntourism opportunities into the BLM Volunteer Program, citizen science, and volunteer vacations provided through partner organizations.

## Enabling and Enhancing Travel and Tourism to and within the United States

### National Strategy Goal 2:

Reduce barriers to trade and make it safer and more efficient for visitors to enter and travel within the United States and its territories.

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 2 includes:

- A safe and reliable domestic transportation infrastructure allows U.S. citizens to travel within our country and connects visitors to the many wonderful destinations located away from major ports of entry. To accommodate growing demand by domestic and international travelers, our transportation infrastructure must be dependable, safe, and efficient.
- Federal grant programs and discretionary funds support the development of pedestrian and bicycle networks and alternative transportation in cities and towns, on federal and tribal lands, and America's byways.
- Infrastructure improvements directed at local residents and commuters, as well as those that provide access to rural areas, also enable travelers to visit less prominent areas and to utilize alternative transportation modes.



Lee Metcalf Wilderness,  
Bear Trap Canyon Unit, Montana



### Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area, California

The Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area is the largest mass of sand dunes in California and was formed by windblown sands of ancient Lake Cahuilla. A favorite location among off-highway vehicle enthusiasts, the dunes also offer fabulous scenery, opportunities for solitude, and a home to rare plants and animals. In addition to riding off-highway vehicles, some other activities visitors enjoy in the recreation area include hiking, photography, wildlife viewing, and camping. Most visitors drive an average of 200 miles to visit the dunes. However, a portion of visitors come from all over the world.

## ***National Strategy Goal 2, Strategy 5: Maintain and improve transportation infrastructure.***

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 2, strategy 5 includes:

- Enable travelers to see America's special places that are off the beaten path through programs that increase access and awareness.



### **BLM Actions**

- When aligned with meeting visitor management goals, provide information about access to rural and lesser known areas. For remote areas, include safety messages.
- Work with local gateway communities and local chambers to promote BLM visitor information.
- Increase access to BLM visitor destinations by expanding the number of recreational maps available online, identifying major access routes and recreational points on the interactive maps, and sharing map data with domestic and international travel and tourism partners.
- Prior to promoting access routes (e.g., self-drive, tour buses), ensure route networks connecting gateway communities to BLM destinations are capable of serving as primary access routes for domestic and international visitors. Incorporate the needs of different tourism markets and associated access needs as part of BLM travel and transportation management planning and decisionmaking processes.
- Update signs for both domestic and international visitors (e.g., use international symbols).
- Link gateway communities to BLM-managed public lands by establishing partnerships with local governments and travel and tourism partners to develop and improve bicycle and pedestrian pathways for locals and visitors.
- Continue to maintain and improve the national system of BLM backcountry byways, and expand involvement in state and national scenic byways/ bikeways programs as proponents or as partners.
- Maintain and improve BLM roads, trails, and facilities associated with nationally designated scenic and historic trails.



**Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area, Nevada**  
The 8-day Burning Man festival hosts tens of thousands of people in an extremely remote area called the Black Rock playa within the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area. Event participants live in this “temporary community dedicated to radical self-expression and self-reliance.” The BLM and partner agencies work together to establish the necessary infrastructure to help ensure a safe event and a Leave No Trace ethic. Burning Man is the largest permitted gathering on public lands administered by the BLM.

## Providing World-Class Customer Service and Visitor Experience

**National Strategy Goal 3:**  
Provide a high-quality visitor experience for U.S. and international visitors to achieve high customer satisfaction and inspire repeat visits.

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 3 includes:

- The Federal Government can use its resources to ensure that we meet a high standard of customer service and provide memorable visitor experiences that will generate new and repeat visitation.
- The challenge for federal agencies is to provide information and services to a wide variety of visitors from across the country and the world. Successful visitor services use up-to-date research about visitor behavior and preferences to facilitate a positive experience by providing services, assistance, information, educational opportunities, and advice, but also the space and freedom to allow visitors the opportunity to discover and be inspired.
- Isolation is another challenge; visitors would benefit from greater collaboration among federal units and gateway communities to design and cross-promote complementary experiences and itineraries.
- Visitation must also be managed responsibly to avoid degrading the world-class resources visitors expect to see and experience.



Sand to Snow National Monument, California

## ***National Strategy Goal 3, Strategy 1: Improve visitor services at federally managed sites.***

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 3, strategy 1 includes:

- Develop additional tourism circuits near top destinations to encourage travelers to expand their itineraries to lesser known destinations, to benefit gateway communities and add valuable vacation days.
- Expand the use of new technology and new media to provide customized visitor information for different cultures, ages, languages, and interests and to decrease the demands on staff at overburdened sites and times.
- Complete strategic road upgrades and reconstruction, public transit development and multimodal connections, land and easement acquisition, and improved access to information about opportunities for recreational, historical, and cultural experiences. Streamline permitting processes for camping or outfitting in similar geographic locations.
- Develop community-based tourism collaborations in key destination markets, especially those with scenic byways, coastal resources, national scenic and historic trails, wild and scenic rivers, and other natural and cultural attractions.
- Partner with local communities and engage with tribes to promote tourism and provide cultural experiences where welcomed and in a manner sensitive to cultural traditions and beneficial to the communities visited.

### **BLM Actions**

- Create volunteer “ambassadors” at popular BLM destinations to provide a more personalized experience for domestic and international travelers.
- Showcase BLM visitor settings and visitor experiences by working with federal and private travel and tourism partners to host thematic natural and cultural resource-focused events and activities (e.g., wildlife and youth education events, Public Lands Day, National Fossil Day, geotourism fairs and festivals, natural night skies programs).
- Strive to provide visitor service infrastructure (physical and informational) that:
  - Is visitor ready.
  - Supports the projected site capacity and diversity of visitor experiences.
  - Meets the needs of domestic and international visitors.
- Use the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council’s “Visitor Use Management Framework: A Guide to Promoting Sustainable Outdoor Recreation” to help managers collaboratively develop long-term strategies for providing access, connecting visitors to key visitor experiences, protecting resources, and managing visitor use.
- Use site planning and project development to identify service needs and expectation gaps.
- Develop educational and interpretative materials that explain to visitors the concepts of sustainable tourism and public land stewardship.
- Complete development of an online permitting tool to help streamline the special recreation permit application process.

Craters of the Moon National Monument, Idaho



## ***National Strategy Goal 3, Strategy 2: Foster a skilled hospitality and tourism industry workforce.***

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 3, strategy 2 includes:

- Develop and utilize messaging to communicate that the United States welcomes visitors to experience our diversity of world-class destinations, to attract new international visitors, and to encourage more Americans to vacation within the United States.
- Engage with travel and tourism industry leaders to develop new competency models.
- Cross-train private sector hospitality and federal recreation and visitor services workforces through collaborative curriculum development and delivery.
- Use technology and new media to foster information sharing, dialogue, and partnerships.
- Target tourism-related businesses to provide youth with summer job experiences, including paid positions, internships, and mentoring/shadowing opportunities.

### **BLM Actions**

- Cross-train travel and tourism partners and BLM visitor services staff through collaborative curriculum development and delivery.
- Collaborate with travel and tourism service providers to identify opportunities for youth and young adults to work with the BLM, while providing travel and tourism services. Include a wide range of opportunities, from education and interpretation programs to site and facility management.
- Collaborate with travel and tourism partners to provide formal and informal training regarding front-line visitor service skills, travel and tourism trends, visitor data interpretation, rules and regulations, outreach, and message development and delivery.
- Partner with college and university tourism and visitor services programs to provide university student internship opportunities.
- Develop a variety of travel and tourism training opportunities in partnership with federal and private sector travel and tourism partners, at the national, state, and local level.

Cosumnes River Preserve, California



## ***National Strategy Goal 3, Strategy 3: Support small business in travel and tourism.***

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 3, strategy 3 includes:

- Develop and coordinate a targeted approach at the federal level to support small- and medium-sized travel and tourism businesses.
- Expand outreach and education. Share content and seek options for working with federal agencies and tourism promotion organizations, including federal land and water managers and the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association.
- Develop co-marketing campaigns with those businesses that are licensed to provide recreation and tourism services on federal lands, waters, and shores.



### **BLM Actions**

- Support gateway communities and their convention and visitor bureaus with the development of their travel and tourism plans, by providing information on recreation and other opportunities and by participating in travel forums and events.





**South Fork of the Snake River, Idaho**  
The South Fork of the Snake River flows 66 miles across southeastern Idaho, through high mountain valleys, rugged canyons, and broad flood plains. The South Fork supports the largest riparian cottonwood gallery forest in the West and is among the most unique and biodiverse ecosystems in Idaho. It is home to 126 bird species, including 21 raptors, meriting an "Important Bird Area" designation by the National Audubon Society. The river also supports the largest native cutthroat trout fishery outside of Yellowstone National Park. More than 300,000 anglers, campers, hikers, boaters, and other recreationists use the South Fork each year.

## Coordinating Across Government

### National Strategy Goal 4:

Prioritize and coordinate support for travel and tourism across the Federal Government.

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 4 includes:

- Successful implementation of the national strategy requires sustained, high-level commitment throughout federal agencies, which in turn will depend on continued recognition of travel and tourism as a priority for the Federal Government.
- In addition to better coordination within the Federal Government, we need to better coordinate with the private sector and state, territorial, tribal, and local governments.
- Better communication and the dissemination of best practices throughout all levels of government and the private sector will strengthen tourism development.
- Agencies should focus resources in areas of common interest and emphasize linkages among resources and connections to a larger American story, such as with itineraries and geographic mapping efforts.



Humbug Spires  
Wilderness Study Area,  
Montana

## ***National Strategy Goal 4, Strategy 1:*** ***Establish travel and tourism as a*** ***U.S. Government priority.***

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 4, strategy 1 includes:

- Institute a formal and inclusive leadership structure for travel and tourism within government and to coordinate with federal agencies to effectively implement the National Travel and Tourism Strategy.
- Conduct outreach with public and private partners. Hold a federal summit on travel and tourism and an annual travel and tourism event to foster communication among federal agencies and leaders of state travel offices, destination management organizations, and trade associations.
- Study and implement best practices. Engage federal agencies in dialogue with other countries on best practices in travel and tourism.

### **BLM Actions**

- Support the Tourism Policy Council's travel and tourism priorities concerning the Federal Government by continuing to serve on the council's travel and tourism technical working groups.
- Provide an annual progress report to the National Travel and Tourism Office about implementation of the national strategy.
- Continue to coordinate with Brand USA, Western States Tourism Policy Council, America's Great Outdoors, American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association, Recreation One Stop, American Recreation Coalition, and other federal, state, and local travel and tourism industry partners.
- Study and implement travel and tourism best management practices by engaging in dialogue with domestic and international travel and tourism partners.



## ***National Strategy Goal 4, Strategy 2: Support tourism development.***

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 4, strategy 2 includes:

- Focus resources on expanding the travel and tourism industry throughout the United States while ensuring the stock of natural and cultural resources is adequately protected and understood in the context of a uniquely American experience.
- Coordinate and publish datasets. Improve the presentation of data by providing effective geotourism information and map products across jurisdictions.
- Engage the public. Involve residents as stewards and ambassadors in preserving, developing, promoting, and managing tourism resources as a source of community pride and economic empowerment.



Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse  
Outstanding Natural Area, Florida



Molalla River Corridor  
Recreation Area, Oregon

### **BLM Actions**

- Provide content for travel and tourism publications by collaborating with government and private travel and tourism partners.
- Develop and share messages about stewardship of public lands and resources, visitor settings and experiences, and recreation opportunities with grassroots geotourism councils and other local marketing and networking organizations.
- Integrate management of travel and tourism into the BLM land use planning process. Address the demand for domestic and international visitor settings and experiences when making land use allocations and decisions. Assess impact on BLM natural and cultural resources and travel and tourism partners.
- Improve data collection and analysis through public-private partnerships.
- Engage with the public by participating in national, regional, state, and local travel and tourism forums.

## Conducting Research and Measuring Results

### National Strategy Goal 5:

Collect and analyze data to support decisionmaking in the public and private sectors and allow the Federal Government to better measure the effectiveness of its efforts to increase travel and tourism.

Upper Missouri River Breaks  
National Monument, Montana



#### Lake Havasu, Arizona

Lake Havasu City can be best described as a beach town in the middle of the desert. The lake provides visitors relief from the heat through many water-based recreational opportunities, including kayaking, standup paddle boarding, fishing, boating, and swimming. To further enhance the recreational experience, the Lake Havasu Field Office offers visitors 73 campsites accessible by boat along 20 miles of the Arizona shore of Lake Havasu. A handful of day-use areas and campgrounds are also available along the Colorado River south of Parker Dam.

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 5 includes:

- Product development, marketing strategies, investment plans, transportation planning, and competitiveness tracking all require good data and information.
- Information on travel and tourism is the basis of sound policy and informs business decisions.
- Strategic planning for and performance measurement of the travel and tourism industry depends on the availability, validity, consistency, and reliability of statistics and information.

## National Strategy Goal 5, Strategy 1: Conduct research.

The following information from the national strategy is provided as background information and guides the BLM actions. Guidance for goal 5 includes:

- Work with the travel and tourism industry to collect and analyze data to support decisionmaking in the public and private sectors and allow the Federal Government to better measure the effectiveness of its efforts to increase travel and tourism.
- Identify data needs. Develop an inventory of available research and identify existing data gaps.
- Partner to fill data gaps. Utilize available federal and private sector research resources and work cooperatively with the private sector to address identified gaps.
- Leverage data with other resources. Use secondary data including travel industry data, government data, and aviation data.
- Work with the travel and tourism industry to collect, analyze, and disseminate data.
- Develop visitor information at federal sites. Develop methodology to provide data to guide management of federal sites that will help ensure visitor safety and satisfaction. As part of that methodology, collect data on visitor trip planning habits to inform federal efforts to develop trip planning tools and resources.



### BLM Actions

- Identify BLM travel and tourism data needs, and provide an appropriate BLM representative to participate on the Tourism Policy Council's research, data, and metric working group.
- Support the BLM's planning and management needs by accessing or collecting relevant data (e.g., environmental, economic, and social science data resulting from travel and tourism on BLM-managed public lands). Analyze the travel and tourism impact on BLM-managed public lands and waters by integrating BLM social and economic data needs into interagency travel and tourism data collection and analysis.
- Use geospatial data to track visitor use trends over time to inform BLM decisions.
- Use BLM travel and tourism data to support planning with government and private partners.
- Support the collection of information, with approval, as appropriate, by the Office of Management and Budget, related to preferred activities, experiences, and outcomes for visitors and adjacent communities to better serve the public's interests.



# Summary

The BLM is the steward of many outstanding and remarkable public lands. The BLM and its partners have the opportunity to attract and welcome millions of domestic and international visitors to these unique places to help them attain outstanding visitor experiences each year. The BLM plans to do this by implementing the “National Travel and Tourism Strategy” and this BLM action plan. The BLM will continue efforts to promote travel and tourism, while sustaining public lands and waters.

The release of the national strategy and the action plan provides the BLM with the opportunity to focus efforts on travel and tourism. Through these efforts, the BLM will improve collaboration with other federal agencies, states, tribes, private partners, local communities, and the public. Some highlights from this action plan include:

- Highlight local and off-the-beaten path attractions, services, and community and cultural interests that sustain and enhance the local geographical character of a place.
- Provide visitors with online georeferenced BLM recreation maps, as appropriate. Share this data with state tourism departments, domestic and international travel and tourism partners, and other travel information outlets.
- Engage travel and tourism providers on the importance of applying sustainable travel and tourism techniques on BLM-managed public lands. Emphasize their role in:
  - Applying and teaching sustainable tourism practices.
  - Telling the unique stories of BLM public lands and gateway communities.
  - Managing visitor numbers.
  - Providing and promoting outstanding visitor settings and experiences to domestic and international visitors.

- Coordinate with geotourism councils and other travel and tourism partners, including gateway communities, to highlight visitor settings and visitor experiences available within the BLM’s recreation areas and National Conservation Lands.
- Collaborate with local and national geotourism councils to develop and maintain BLM visitor services content used for online interactive destination maps; itinerary-building tools, apps, and stories; and other geotourism visitor information.
- Support the BLM’s planning and management needs by accessing or collecting relevant data (e.g., environmental, economic, and social science data resulting from travel and tourism on BLM-managed public lands). Analyze the travel and tourism impact on BLM-managed public lands and waters by integrating BLM social and economic data needs into interagency travel and tourism data collection and analysis.
- Support the collection of information, with approval, as appropriate, by the Office of Management and Budget, related to preferred activities, experiences, and outcomes for visitors and adjacent communities to better serve the public’s interests.



*The BLM looks forward to continued collaboration with all of its travel and tourism partners as we work together to implement the national strategy and the BLM’s action plan.*



**partnership:** a voluntary and mutually beneficial collaborative relationship between the BLM and one or more partners. It is built on the contributions of each partner and formed to achieve, or to assist in achieving, a common goal.

**service provider:** an entity that provides or organizes experiences on public lands (examples include travel agents, outfitters, and guides).

**sustainable tourism:** tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities (World Tourism Organization 2017). The BLM further defines sustainable tourism to include tourism and travel management practices that support sustaining resources consistent with multiple use.

**tourist:** someone traveling 50 miles or more from home.

**travel and tourism partner:** a term to refer to individuals, organizations, agencies, tribes, and/or other entities interacting in a relationship (partnership) with the BLM, to achieve common travel and/or tourism goals of both the partner and the BLM.

**visitor experience:** tangible or intangible, the act of processing surroundings and settings. A visitor may experience a setting by participating in activities such as hiking, hunting, self-reflection, learning about wildlife, learning about history and different cultures, exploring dinosaur tracksites, biking, and photography.

**visitor setting:** a specific area or region that provides opportunities for visitor experiences. Visitor settings include primitive to urban areas including austere cliffs, wild rivers, deep forests, golden grasslands, foot and bike trails, visitor centers, and developed campsites.



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